

No. 18. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 18th November 1872, No. 2,223:—

Read the following letter from G. VANSAGNEW, Esq., Collector of Nellore, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, dated Camp at Sangam, 15th October 1872, No. 2,419:—

I HAVE the honour to furnish the report called for in G. O., Revenue Department, dated 19th October last, No. 1,819, communicated to me by the Board on the 15th November. The returns called for from the taluqs reached me by May, but as it was my intention to make an extended tour through the taluqs I thought it best to defer reporting until after I had had this opportunity of personally investigating the subject and gathering the feelings of the people in different parts of the district thereon.

2. Having within the past four months traversed the greater part of the principal division, inspected many of the pasture lands, and conversed on the spot with the villagers interested therein, I can now record the opinion I have formed on the subject with considerably more confidence than my previous opportunities would have admitted of my doing.

3. The actual questions asked by the Government might be very briefly answered to the following effect. The result of the leasing by auction system has been that in no year since has the average rate per acre reached that of Annas 1-4, referred to in paragraph 9 of the G. O. In 1869-70 and 1870-71 the rate was Annas 1-3, and in last year it fell to Annas 1-1 per acre.

4. With but a few exceptions here and there, the tenancy remains with the same parties.

5. As to "the effect of the system on the professed cattle-breeders of the district," there is scarcely any one to whom the term applies, if by professed cattle-breeders are intended persons who breed cattle as a profession distinct from agriculture. There is but one ryot in the district who owns over 1,000 head of cattle, and but very few—none in the sub-division—who can count their stock in hundreds. Almost every at all substantial ryot breeds a few cattle. The auction system, as contrasted with what preceded it, has had no appreciable effect on cattle-breeding in general.

6. It will thus be seen that further experience has certainly not justified the Board's belief in this auction system being well calculated to realize the average value of the pasture land throughout the district. Nothing can be more obvious to me than that, while it is as unpopular as possible, it is about the most unprofitable mode of dealing with the pastures that could be devised. So far I go cordially with Mr. Dykes in condemning the system. Although his worst apprehensions have hardly been fulfilled, I find that it is hateful to the villagers—however successful very many of them may be in repressing competition and getting their kanchas at rates far below their known value—to have no absolute security, and to feel that they really are at the mercy of any one. To be relieved of this hateful insecurity, I have not met with a single set of villagers who would not rather pay a fixed rate of Annas 2 per acre, in order to secure permanency of tenure, and this even in the case of kanchas which, I can say from observation, are not worth 2 Annas an acre.

7. Considering that of *occupied* dry lands the extent cultivated ten years ago was upwards of 3 lacs and is now over 6 lacs of acres, and the extent kept waste has risen in the same period from over 50,000 to over 130,000 acres, and that the pending new settlement is likely to raise the revenue demand, and also looking to the burden of local cesses, I do not think that such a kancha revenue as we are now getting (about Rs. 30,000) would be worth insisting upon; and I would have been prepared to advocate the relinquishment of it, but that our abandonment of all interference with the kanchas would lead to a terrible amount of discord among the villagers, regarding the control and disposal of them.

8. I therefore fall back, as Mr. Dykes did, on a fixed rate. How the rate should be fixed I will consider further on. Mr. Dykes's idea was to leave it to the villagers, *i.e.*, the village officers and leading men, to arrange for the payment, and if they failed in doing so, that the Divisional officer should apportion the pasturage at the fixed rent with reference to the ~~share~~ held by the several parties. This would be perpetuating the worst feature of the kancha system, and therefore at this point I must part company with Mr. Dykes. Under this old Nellore plan the poorer and more ignorant ryots are handed over, tied and bound, to the big men of the village to be fleeced at will. It is this indefinite system that helps more than anything else at the present day to demoralize every one brought in contact with it. My Sheristadar, who was appointed by Mr. Dykes eight years ago, describes the truth thus:—

“There is an evil which no one has referred to, although it is one which every one fully knows. The villagers pay a fixed sum to Government for kanchas; so they did under the old system. The amount is collected from all the inhabitants. But the amount collected is invariably much larger than the amount paid to Government. What is done with the surplus? This is formed into a fund to meet what they call “village expenses.” Now-a-days there is no “chapavani” (concealed cultivation) or other fraud which formerly enabled village officers to meet improper demands from higher officials. It is this fund which now enables them to attend to such requests. The abolition of the pasture rents would lessen the means of corruption to a certain degree at least. It is my impression that the abolition of kanchas would put down the corruption in taluqs with bad Tahsildars at their head.”

9. The Government should recognize no system that exposes the ordinary ryot to an undefined demand.

10. To maintain the kancha revenue and at the same time to fix the demand on individuals, I would proportion the kancha demand at the fixed rate per acre on the several puttass. Thus, every ryot would have the means of knowing exactly what he ought to pay. But as of course the kancha area itself cannot be apportioned to each individual ryot, something further is required. It would not do for ryots, paying in unequal proportions according to the respective amounts of their puttass, each to pasture his cattle, whatever their number, indiscriminately in the kanchas. I find that the supporting power of each kancha is well known to the people on the spot: whether it takes one acre, or two, or three, according to the quality of the soil and grass and the presence or absence of jungle, to support

a full grown animal, I find no hesitation among the people in stating as a fact familiar to them.

11. Such being the case, it would be easy to fix a commutation scale for each kancha. Supposing it was a rich kancha that could support an animal per acre, for each two annas (or whatever may be the rate per acre fixed) entered in a ryot's putta under the head of kancha demand, he should have the right to graze a full grown animal. It should be open to him either to exercise the right by grazing his own cattle, or to sell it to any one he pleases for any price he chooses to ask and can get. This is really a simple plan which would be easily understood by our ryots. Supposing that a village has more kancha land than can be utilized by its own cattle, according to custom the surplus would be leased to outsiders; at present, in such cases, the arrangement is conducted by the leading men and is a mystery to the ordinary ryots. The village officers make what use of the money they please. There are no authoritative accounts according to which an ordinary ryot could make and insist upon a definite claim to a share in such profits. According to the proposed plan he could lease separately on his own account his own interest, or, if he consented to a joint transaction, he could demand his share in the proportion fixed in his putta, and, on this evidence, could enforce it.

12. The existing kancha system is as demoralizing as anything that preceded it. Over-collections by the village officers from the ryots are the rule and not the exception under it, and my Sheristadar has accurately described the use that is made of the surplus fund. Fixing the individual demand in the putta will put a stop to this corruption.

13. One of my Tahsildars has just been criminally convicted and sent to jail for walking off with Rupees 100 from the surplus kancha fund of a single village. Incidentally I may mention, that he has also been convicted of issuing Income-tax notices to parties and making believe to assess them, and then exacting bribes for himself on the plea of exempting them. It is a mistake to suppose that things do not go on because few cases come to light. The Income-tax, even as it exists at present, is a terrible engine of oppression in the hands of a corrupt Tahsildar; but to detect such rogueries so as to secure the sort of evidence that the Board and the Government insist upon having before they will permit a Tahsildar to be removed from his post, is a very difficult matter. For two years I have been forced to keep this Tahsildar, though I have known perfectly well all along that he was robbing every one he came across right and left. Last year I recommended his dismissal to the Board on what I know, and every one in the district knows, to have been a perfectly true charge, but the Board took a different view and reinstated the man.

Their action has cost the inhabitants of the poorest part of this district thousands of Rupees. I mention all this to prove that if the hands of Collectors must remain as tightly tied as they now are, such opportunities as are afforded by the Income-tax and this irregular kancha system should not be thrown in the way of their subordinates.

14. The above, I venture to submit, is far the most important point of view from which to regard the kancha system. Under existing circumstances the

amount of revenue concerned is of comparatively trifling consequence. To take but a low view of the matter it must be admitted that it would require a far larger amount of revenue to be involved to justify us in maintaining so rampant an element of corruption in that part of the administration which is in immediate contact with the ryot.

15. The practice of making the ryots pay for the pasturage of waste lands is, as far as I am aware, confined to this district. Whatever may have been the causes that led to this exceptional treatment of the Nellore ryot in old days, they cannot, in the face of the enormous extension of cultivation, be said now to exist; and, if I thought that the rank and file of the ryots would benefit by the total abolition of the charge, I would certainly advocate that measure. But they are so wedded to what they have been accustomed to, they are so excessively ignorant, credulous and stupid, that I feel satisfied that if all Government demand was withdrawn they would still be made to pay pullary, if no longer for the benefit of the Government, for that of the village officers and few influential persons in each village who have hitherto been in the habit of pulling the wires. Therefore I think that payment to Government should continue, provided only that such payment is defined in the case of each individual in the formal manner I have already indicated.

16. The question of the rate per acre to be fixed now requires consideration. It must be admitted that the incidence of a single uniform rate would be very uneven. Mr. Dykes first proposed 4 Annas per acre in the coast taluqs and 2 Annas in the western ones, but finally recommended a single uniform rate of 2 Annas as a temporary measure, until an appropriate rate for each taluq should be determined. I find, however, that there is a vast difference in the quality and consequent value of kanchas in the same taluq, and indeed in adjacent villages, so that a uniform taluq rate would be as wide of the mark as a uniform rate for the whole district.

17. As regards a 2-Anna rate per acre, it would fall very lightly on rich kancha lands, moderately on those of middling quality, and too heavily on the poorer sort.

18. I think if I were permitted I could undertake to divide the kancha of the various villages into three classes according to their quality correctly, and without opening a door to tricks and exactions in the matter of the classification. In that case, if it is still held desirable to raise a substantial revenue from kanchas, I would fix 3 Annas per acre as the rate on first class kanchas, 2 Annas on second class, and 1 Anna on the third class. If, under all the circumstances of the present time, a solution of the question is sought rather in the interests of the people than of the revenue, the above rates might be halved.

19. I am in favour of the lower rates. Except in his own interest, I do not see why at the present day the Nellore ryot should be the only one to be taxed in respect of his cattle. According to the statement of agricultural statistics printed with Proceedings of the Board, dated 21st August last, No. 1,645, Nellore stands fourth among the districts in area, and only fourteenth in point of number of cattle. It may be that our exceptional interference with the pasture lands of Nellore accounts for this disproportion.

20. My proposal, therefore, is to rate the kanchas in three classes at $1\frac{1}{2}$ Annas, 1 Anna, and 6 Pies, respectively; to proportion the total kancha demand thus arrived at on the puttass of each village; and to regulate the exercise of the individual right, so paid for, by fixing a scale for each village, proportioning the number of cattle to the acreage of the kancha, according to its quality.

21. The plan may seem complex on paper, but in practice it would be simple and intelligible to those concerned. Even at the low rates proposed it would be as remunerative to Government as the present system, while it would be as popular as the latter is detested; and last, but not least, I urge its adoption as the best possible means of purifying the relations between the ryots and the Revenue establishment.

THIS report, has been elicited in consequence of a letter from Mr. Dykes to the Secretary of State, urging that the system now in force of renting out by auction surplus pasturage in Nellore discourages the breeding of stock by placing the breeder at the mercy of any one who chooses to bid against him, will be submitted for the information of Government.

2. It is stated that with but a few exceptions the pasturage remains with the parties who held it before the auction system was introduced, that the average rate paid per acre has fallen from Rupee 0-1-4 in 1868-69 to Rupee 0-1-3 in 1869-70 and 1870-71 and Rupee 0-1-1 in 1871-72, and that there are not any professed cattle-breeders in the district.

3. This shows conclusively that the objections urged by Mr. Dykes have not been realized.

4. Nevertheless Mr. VansAgnew pronounces against the auction system on the ground that it has not justified the Board's belief that it would secure the average value of the pasture land, and that though the villagers got their pasturage on moderate terms, the possibility that possession might be disturbed when the annual auction occurs makes them detest the system.

5. The first of these two reasons rests on bare assertion, for there is nothing in the report to show that the average rate of Rupee 0-1-1 per acre is not the full value of the rent. The Board doubt the second reason for the rent being admittedly light and the ownership almost unchanging, the annual auction cannot be much dreaded.

6. Mr. VansAgnew considers the most important point of view from which the subject of pasturage rents can be regarded is that of a Collector repressing corruption. His Sheristadar assures him and he believes that when the village headmen get the pasturage they sub-let it to the villagers at a profit and form the profits into a fund for meeting "improper demands from higher officials."

7. To remedy existing evils he proposes to classify the pasturage tracts into three classes, to assess them at $1\frac{1}{2}$ Annas, 1 Anna, and 6 Pies an acre respectively, to apportion the total demand for the rented pasturage of each village to the villagers in accordance with the putta-demand of each, and to determine the number of cattle per acre that the tract can support. Each puttadar is then to be entitled to graze a number of cattle which bears the same proportion to

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
4th April 1873.*

the total number which the whole tract will support, as the part of the pasturage rent payable by him does to the total demand, and he may sell or transfer any portion of this right.

8. The Board cannot believe that this system, administered amongst a people whom Mr. VansAgnew regards as "excessively ignorant, credulous and stupid," would turn out to be so simple as he supposes, nor do they see how it would prevent the formation of a bribery fund.

9. In paragraph 13 prominent allusion is made to the case of Venugunti Narayana Row as a Tahsildar "sent to jail for walking off with Rupees 100 from the kancha fund of a single village." It is difficult to suppose that Mr. VansAgnew thought this a case in point to prove that the pasturage rents are a source of corruption, and it seems clear on the contrary that it was dragged into the letter only to give opportunity for an unseemly reference to the acquittal of the Tahsildar in Board's Proceedings, 6th July 1871, No. 2,749, on a charge which had been pressed against him with great energy but with still greater want of judgment. The Board observe without surprise, but with deep regret, the temper shown in the following sentences:—"I have known perfectly well all along that he was robbing every one he came across right and left. Last year I recommended his dismissal to the Board on what I know and everybody in the district knows to have been a perfectly true charge, but the Board took a different view and reinstated the man. Their action has cost the inhabitants of the poorest part of the district

No. 19.

ORDER THEREON, 4th April 1873, No. 386.

Miscellaneous

THE "Cunchas" of Nellore are, in Mr. Dykes's words, "large tracts of thousands of acres on which no regular assessment has ever been imposed, and for which it would not be profitable to pay a grain rent." The State is clearly entitled to a fair rental for the pasturage they afford, and, as a fact, they have always realized a revenue from them. Mr. Dykes reported that in the western part of the district, where there are extensive tracts, they were rented annually on tenders received for the purpose; that there was sometimes much competition for them, and the best offers were accepted. In other cases, they were rented to, or charged upon, the villagers who either pastured their own cattle on them, or sub-rented them to others. When the "Poollary" or tax on cattle was abolished (involving a relief from taxation of nearly a lakh of rupees), Mr. Dykes proposed, as a temporary arrangement, that the pasture lands should be let for a term of two years at an upset price of 2 Annas per acre in the western and 4 Annas per acre in the coast taluqs, being offered first to the villagers, and, if refused by them, then to the highest bidder. The Board of Revenue and Government preferred renting the lands in suitable lots, with precautions against monopoly, to the highest bidder; a reservation of thirty per cent. being made for the free pasturage of the cattle of the villager. Mr. Dykes is apprehensive that, under this system, the owners of cattle may be out-bid for the pasture-tracts by speculators, or be obliged to pay ruinously high prices for what to them, as breeders, is an absolute necessity. The present Collector, however, reports that these apprehensions are

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
4th April 1873.*

groundless, as the average rate realized is considerably below what Mr. Dykes proposed as an upset price, and that, "with but a few exceptions, here and there the tenancy remains with the same parties." The Government will report this to the Secretary of State.

2. Mr. VansAgnew further states that the present system is intensely unpopular, and that the villagers would gladly pay a higher rate for absolute security of tenure. He proposes to divide the "Cunchas" into three classes rated at $1\frac{1}{2}$, 1, and $\frac{1}{2}$ Anna per acre, and, in order to avoid malpractices, to charge the result rateably on all the land-holders.

3. The question is one of great importance to the district, and the Government resolve to depute Mr. W. Robinson, a Member of the Board of Revenue, to Nellore after the hot season to investigate the matter in consultation with the local officers and the officers of the Settlement Department, and to report the result with his opinion. He will at the same time be instructed to report on Mr. Dykes's fuel reserves and experiments.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) R. A. DALYELL,
Acting Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

„ W. Robinson, Esq., C.S.I.

„ the Director of Revenue Settlement.

„ the Accountant-General.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

C. No. 3827

From Board of Revenue

Dated 18th November

1872.

FOR ORDERS.

The "Cuncho" of Kellore are, in
 their own words, "large tracts of
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as a fact, they have always re-
-alised a revenue from them - her
by her reported that in the Western
part of the District, where there are
extensive tracts, they were rented
annually on tenders received for
the purpose. That there are some times
much can be taken for them, and
the best offers were accepted. In
these cases they were rented to or
changed upon the villagers, who
either have their own cattle
or have or ~~under~~ sub-let them
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on cattle, was abolished (involving
a relief from taxation of heavily

a lack of lumber) that by
as a temporary arrangement that
the pasture lands should be let
for a term of 2 years at an upset
price of 2 annas ^{per acre} in the Western, &
4 annas per acre in the Coast District,
being offered first to the villagers
if refused by them, then to the
best bidder. The H. of the
put the former renting the lands
in the latter - in the former
against the former policy - to the highest
bidder - a reservation of 30 per cent
being made for the poor for tending
of the cattle of the villagers. Mr.
Dykes is of the opinion that in
the system the owners of cattle

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the out- bid for
the pasture tract
by speculators - or
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new prices for a lot to them, as breeders
the is an absolute necessity. The present
the Colon however reports that these ob-
charge free holders are powerless - as
either the average rate realized is considerably
below what they had hoped as
an export price - that "in the best of
exceptions, here & there, the tenant
remains in the same position." I
will report them to the Secy of State.

James Kaufmann
FOR ORDERS.
Baltimore

Wm. Agnew reports that these
w/22 R. B. March 173

24. Nelson. Pastures

the present system is in the only
unpopular, and that the villagers
would gladly buy a high rate
for ^{absolute} security of tenure - and be
willing to share the "Canadian"
proposals to share the land at 1 1/2
in three classes rated at 1 1/2
1 & 1/2 acres a year - and in
order to avoid bad positions to
charge the result rather by
all the land holders. I have
not sufficient confidence in

Mr. Davis: Agrees in content
to accept his statement of
hand. He are about, I believe,
to send a man here of the Board
on Circuit this year to the
Circuit District to make an
inquiry about the salt -
I could have been his going
afterwards to the line - looking
into this matter & consulting
the local officers & the settlement
officers & be bringing to the

172-26 March 173

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result. I should like him
to report on his by the
of reasons & experiments.
I believe will be best for him to
be being done immediately -
this does not seem to require
I think Mr. Van Orman
presence to the Whitehall
case [house in proper & would
like him to]. It has nothing
to do with the matter at issue,
for there is no tax out of which
an underscriven official
cannot make illicit profits &

No. 386-

PROCEEDINGS of the MADRAS GOVERNMENT.

Under date the 4th March 1873.

Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue

Submitting with remarks
Report of J. J. of Nellore on objections
raised by late J. J. M. Dykes to
system now in force of renting
out surplus pasturage land by
auction.

A. E. 18 Nov. 1872, No. 2223.

The "Cunchas" of Nellore
are, in Mr. Dykes's words, "large
tracts of thousands of acres on
which no regular assessment has
ever been imposed and for which
it would not be profitable to pay
a grain rent." The State is
clearly entitled to a fair rental
for the pasturage they afford,
and, as a fact, they have always
realised a revenue from them.

M.

I agree with Mr. Sim
that it is desirable that
the first should have a
report on the pasturage
land of Nellore from an
officer of experience & judgment
Mr. Thornhill may with
advantage have this enquiry
& the enquiry on the other
points to which Mr. Sim
refers, confided to him
when engaged on the
Earth Salt question
With regard to Mr. Thornhill's
tour, it should I think
R.C. 15* R 6. March 1873
C. 6. Dec 1872 R 18. Feb 1873.

be postponed till after
the rains in June -
The debt will be
unbearable in some
of the places he has
to visit, before that
time. -

M.E

I think it very
desirable that
Mr. Thornhill should be
requested to prepare
a report upon this
subject. J. J. March 1873

Mr. Dykes reported that in the western part of the District, where there are extensive tracts, they were rented annually on tenders received for the purpose; that there was sometimes much competition for them, and the best offers were accepted. In other cases they were rented to or charged upon the villagers, who either pastured their own cattle on them, or sub-rented them to others.

When the "Pollary," or tax on cattle, was abolished (involving a relief from taxation of nearly a lac of rupees) Mr. Dykes proposed as a temporary arrangement that the pasture lands should be let for a term of two years at an upset price of 2 annas per acre in the Western, and 4 annas per acre in the Coast

Taluk.

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Taluk, being offered first to the villagers, and if refused by them, then to the highest bidder. The Board of Revenue and Govt. proposed renting the lands in suitable lots, with precautions against monopoly, to the highest bidder, a reservation of 30 per cent being made for the free pasturage of the cattle of the villagers. Mr. Dykes is apprehensive that under this system the owners of may be out-bid for the pasture tracts by speculators, or be obliged to pay ruinously high prices for what to them, as breeders, is an absolute necessity. The present Collector however reports that these apprehensions are groundless, as the average rate realized is considerably below what Mr. Dykes proposed as

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an upset price, and that "with but a few exceptions, here and there, the tenancy remains with the same parties." The Govt. will report this to the Secretary of State.

2. Mr. Vans Agnew further states that the present system is intensely unpopular, and that the villagers would gladly pay a higher rate for absolute security of tenure. He proposes to divide the "Cunchas" into three classes, rated at $1\frac{1}{2}$, 1, and $\frac{1}{2}$ anna per acre, and, in order to avoid malpractices, to charge the result, rateably on all the landholders.

3. The question is one of great importance to the District, and the Govt. ^{respects it} ~~will take an early~~ opportunity of deputation ^{Mr. W. Robinson} ~~Member~~.

Mr. Thom like
has returned -
should have strongly
recommended his
friend Mr. Robinson!
to be best obti-
tude in making
investigation. I
was away during
the Lt. Di. Vans
L. Vans Agnew
the 14th.

L. V.

W. H. L.
willing to
omit this

Compd. J. H.

of the Board of Revenue to
after the hot season
Morrow, to investigate the matter
in consultation with the local
officers and the officers of the
Settlement Dept., and report the
result with his opinion. He
will at the same time be
instructed to report on Mr.
Dykes's Fuel reserves and
experiments.

~~4. Mr. Vans Agnew
improper reference to the
Tahsiladar's case has already
been separately noticed. It
is obvious that it had nothing to
do with the matter at issue, for
there is no tax out of which an
unscrupulous official cannot
make illicit gains.~~

16 Board of Rev. Dec. 5 April 73
1. W. Robinson Esq. C.S. 9. 1
13. Dir. of Rev. Settlements
6. Accts. General

2 G-O

Renting out: surplus
Pasture land in the
Yellow St

Slurpalt
S.M.

Comme